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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, EEB/TRA/ATP
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SUBJECT: ETIHAD AIRWAYS UPDATES

11. (U) This message contains business proprietary information. Not for internet distribution.

12. (SBU) Summary. On February 12, Econoff and FCSoFF met with Etihad Airways CEO James Hogan, Manager of International Affairs Vijay Poonoosamy, and Vice President of Operations Richard Hill. Hogan discussed Etihad's recent personnel changes and noted that he wants the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be aware of the changes. He also said that he wants to re-align the fleet and discussed the possibility of adding more Boeings. Hogan noted that he is disappointed with Etihad's performance on its New York flight and is changing its scheduling in April for better connection times. Hogan also said that Etihad is meeting this week with American, United, and Jet Blue to discuss code-sharing opportunities. End summary.

13. (SBU) During the February 12 meeting, CEO Hogan told Emboffs that Etihad had made a number of changes in its personnel and that he wanted to be sure that the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) knew about these changes. Hogan said, "I do not take safety or security lightly. There will be no 'issues' in Etihad under my watch." He also said that former Accountable Officer and Vice President of Operations, Helmut Weixler, was no longer with Etihad. In addition to being CEO, Hogan is also now Etihad's Accountable Officer and Richard Hill is Etihad's new Vice President for Operations. Hogan also told Emboffs that Etihad's former Security Manager, Gary Cooper, is no longer with the company. Etihad is ready to hire a new Security Manager, who was formerly head of security for South African Airlines, but is waiting for final approval from the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). Hill said he had spoken to the GCAA and the new head of security should be approved at any time.

14. (SBU) Although Etihad is currently losing money, Hogan stated that Etihad will break even by 2010. Hogan wants to re-align the fleet and discussed the possibility of adding more Boeings, commenting, "I wish I had more 777's."

15. (SBU) Hogan is disappointed over Etihad's performance in the U.S. market and discussed ways to improve the carrier's market share in the United States. The current average passenger load on Etihad's daily flight to New York is only 22 percent. Hogan feels the numbers are low because of the poor connection times. In April, Etihad is changing its New York route scheduling in order to have better connection times. Hogan also said that Etihad is meeting this week with American, United and Jet Blue to discuss code-sharing, which will increase passenger load on the NY flight. Hogan said he would like to add a flight to Los Angeles, but would not do so until the NY flight carries a 70 percent passenger load.

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